



# Navy Suicide Prevention

## 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT REDUCING ACCESS TO LETHAL MEANS

Navy has released guidance for commanding officers (CO) and health professionals on reducing access to commonly used highly lethal methods of suicide (lethal means) through voluntary storage of privately-owned firearms. This guidance is part of a broader Department of Defense (DoD) strategy to help prevent suicide in the military. Below are **five things all Sailors should know** about the guidance and their rights to make an informed decision if the need arises:

### 1. Why was the guidance developed?

Firearms were used in half of all Navy suicide deaths in 2012 and 2013, and continue to be the primary method used in both military and civilian suicides. Research indicates that suicides can be prevented when a highly lethal method isn't readily available. These voluntary measures are intended to save Sailors' lives by helping them avoid taking irreversible actions, providing the opportunity for intervention and care.

### 2. What does the guidance do?

NAVADMIN 263/14 states that commanders and health professionals may ask Sailors, who are believed to be at risk for suicide or causing harm to others, to voluntarily allow their privately-owned firearms to be stored for safekeeping by the command. It also establishes procedures to protect the rights of Sailors who consent to storage. The guidance applies to all Sailors (both active and reserve) and is in accordance with Section 1057 of the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2013.

### 3. What does it mean to "voluntarily surrender my privately-owned firearm"?

If a Sailor agrees to temporarily surrender his or her weapon for safekeeping, the commanding officer will ensure that it is securely stored on the installation or other available location in coordination with local authorities. It will be returned at a later time upon the Sailor's request or at the end of the predetermined storage period set between the CO and the Sailor.

### 4. Can a CO or health professional take my privately-owned firearm without my consent?

No. While COs and health professionals are authorized to inquire about a Sailor's privately-owned firearms if they believe the Sailor is at risk, surrendering the firearm is entirely voluntary. Incentives and disincentives shall not be offered to coerce the Sailor and influence his or her decision.

### 5. What are common warning signs that may indicate a Sailor is "at risk for suicide"?

Signs may include expressing thoughts of hurting oneself or others, developing plans to take lethal action, giving away possessions, social withdrawal, expressing feelings of hopelessness or despair, uncharacteristic substance abuse or violence.

For more information, refer to [NAVADMIN 263/14](#), visit Navy Suicide Prevention at [www.suicide.navy.mil](http://www.suicide.navy.mil), or the Defense Suicide Prevention Office at [www.suicideoutreach.org](http://www.suicideoutreach.org).

Seeking help is a sign of strength. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (option 1), text 838255 or visit [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net).

*Life Counts!*  
Ask Care Treat